

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of managing of products each having a plurality of parts, comprising the steps of:

    creating an original structural tree of a product which defines a relationship between the product and its parts;

    assigning part numbers to the product and parts, the same part number being assigned to products and parts having the same structure;

    assigning unique serial numbers to the product and at least major parts thereof, different serial numbers being assigned to separate products and parts even if they have the same structure;

    entering the part numbers and serial numbers in the structural tree;

    storing the resultant structural tree in a database connected to a computer;

    marking the serial numbers on the product and parts assigned therewith.

2. The method as defined in Claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

    linking attributes of the product and parts to which the serial numbers are assigned, to the serial numbers; and  
    storing the attributes together with their linking information in the database.

3. The method as defined in Claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

    linking histories of the product and parts to which

the serial numbers are assigned, to the serial numbers; and storing the histories together with their linking information in the database.

4. A parts management server connected to a database and user terminals, for managing products each having a plurality of parts, comprising:

means for supporting a user to create a structural tree of a product to be stored in the database, which defines a relationship between the product and its parts, and contains part numbers assigned to the product and the parts and unique serial numbers assigned to the product and at least major parts, the same part number being assigned to products and parts having the same structure, but different serial numbers being assigned to products and parts even if they have the same structure; and

means for providing information of the structural tree stored in the database to a user terminal when it is retrieved by using the serial numbers.

5. The server as defined in Claim 4, wherein the supporting means is further adapted to support the user to enter in the database, attributes of the product and parts to which the serial numbers are assigned.

6. The server as defined in Claim 5, the supporting means is further adapted to support the user to enter in the database, histories of the product and parts to which the serial numbers are assigned.

7. A structural tree of a product each having a plurality of parts, for managing the product, wherein the

structural tree is made by the steps of:

    creating an original structural tree of a product which defines a relationship between the product and its parts;

    assigning part numbers to the product and parts, the same part number being assigned to products and parts having the same structure;

    assigning unique serial numbers to the product and at least major parts thereof, different serial numbers being assigned to separate products and parts even if they have the same structure;

    entering the part numbers and serial numbers in the structural tree; and

    storing the resultant structural tree in a database connected to a computer.